

NSC 5412  
SECRET

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### ARGENTINE SITUATION

I. Replacement of Argentine provisional president Lonardi by a "stronger" government is subject of persistent rumors.

A. Names most frequently mentioned as possible replacements, either singularly or as a junta, are:

1. Rear Admiral Isaac Rojas, vice president.
2. Former Minister of the Army Gen. Leon Bengoa, who just resigned under pressure.
3. Gen. Felix Videla Balaguer, in charge of Cordoba Province.

B. All three were key figures in September revolt. All are considered friendly to the United States.

These rumors probably reflect tension and severe strain on unity from efforts of a predominantly military regime to undertake reorganization of the admin-

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- A. Lonardi cabinet lacks organiz( political support and has had to formulate policy in midst of diverse opinions and ambitions.
- B. Although government denies Uruguayan radio reports of Lonardi's resignation, it has admitted Lonardi<sup>and</sup> top military officials have been holding series of meetings to stress need for greater cohesion within regime.
- C. According to press reports, however, several cabinet resignations in addition to Bengoa's are expected--Foreign Minister Mario Amadeo mentioned.

III. Controversy over need for stronger executive is reported to include concern over the extent of purge of the armed forces, profiteering in recent revision in exchange rates, and renewed activity of Peronista groups. 27

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- A. The arrest of 300 militant Peronistas on 8 November and a government communique ordering civilians to turn in all arms suggest new uneasiness within the regime.
- B. Increasing evidence that Peronistas and Communists exploiting unsettled situation.
- C. Further uncertainty stems from Lonardi's ill health. His son says he has high blood pressure and stomach ulcers.

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